

that will help secure Iraq by withdrawing our troops, which will ensure that America's role in Iraq actually does make America safer. So far 27 of my House colleagues have joined me as co-sponsors of this important legislation.

My plan for Iraq is part of a larger strategy that I call SMART Security, which is a Sensible, Multilateral American Response to Terrorism that will ensure America's security by relying on smarter policies.

Madam Speaker, let me be clear. We would not abandon Iraq and we should not. There is still a critical role for the United States in providing the developmental aid that can help recreate a robust civil society, build schools and water processing plants, and ensure that Iraq's economic infrastructure becomes fully viable.

Instead of troops, we need to send scientists, educators, urban planners, and constitutional experts to help rebuild Iraq's fighting economic and physical infrastructure and help establish a robust and democratic civil society. We need to pursue a new approach, and we need to do that because it has become clear the military option is not working. That is not the ideological statement of someone who opposed the war on principle, though I am that. It is a sober assessment of the situation in Iraq that is now shared across the political spectrum. We must truly support our troops, and the right way to do this is by bringing them home.

THE FARM BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CONAWAY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, recently other members of the House Committee on Agriculture and I met with the Commissioner of Agriculture of the European Union. She was not very complimentary of our current farm bill. She knows it keeps our farm economy very competitive with the European Union. Unfortunately, this commissioner's sentiments mirror the sentiments of many Americans. Many believe that the farm bill is too expensive, and I believe as we write a new budget the farm bill will certainly be on the chopping block.

But I think it is important that we think about and remember a few things as we go into this process. First of all, in looking at the chart here, we can see that the current farm bill, which went into effect in 2002, actually was budgeted to cost \$14 billion that year and it cost \$13 billion. In 2003 it was budgeted to cost about 18.6 and it cost 12.1. In 2004, which we have just completed, the projected budgetary cost was \$17.5 billion, and it actually cost \$10.1 billion. So the net effect is that what was supposed to cost roughly \$50 billion has cost us \$35 billion. So the farm program is one of the few Federal pro-

grams that is way under budget and has certainly given the taxpayer a tremendous return on investment.

The other thing that we might want to remember is that during this period of time, we have had a tremendous drought in the western part of the United States. The drought map has looked something like this for about the last 5 years. So interestingly enough, the emergency payments for the drought have been included in these farm bill expenditures. In the past, in the previous farm bill, when we had a drought or we had emergency spending, it was always over and above. But in these cases, part of this 13.2 and part of that 10.1 was emergency spending for drought. So, again, this has been a very efficient and a very lean process, and we think that the farm bill has served a great purpose in that sense.

The other thing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out is that we really do not subsidize our farmers anywhere near what some other nations do. For instance, the average farm subsidy per acre in the United States, according to this farm program, is \$38 per acre. The European Union's is \$295 per acre. So the ratio is about \$7 European Union for \$1 in the United States. Japan subsidizes their agriculture \$3,655 per acre, a ratio of roughly 100 to one.

So why in the world would Japan and Europe subsidize agriculture to that degree? I think part of the reason is that 60 years ago during World War II, they realized how important a food supply was. Their food supply was decimated, and when their populace has been hungry, they begin to realize that that is something they are going to protect no matter what.

So in summary, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to mention four things regarding the farm bill. First of all, farmers plan their operation based on the farm bill. They are operating loans. Their land payments they have is based on the farm program, and if we start tinkering with it, if we start changing the farm bill in mid-course, we really do not do them justice. We will write a new farm bill in 2007. If we want to make changes, that is certainly the time that we should do that. But we should not do it now when they have one set of assumptions and then have that changed.

Secondly, we currently spend only 9 percent of our income in the United States on food. This is by far the lowest amount of money that people spend, at least proportionate money, that any civilized nation or any developed nation in the country, or in the world, spends at the present time, only 9 percent.

And, thirdly, if we fail to protect our food supply, we may see that what happens to the food supply would be the same as what happened to our petroleum situation. We found suddenly one day that we could purchase oil from OPEC at \$10, \$11 a barrel. We began to

quit exploring in this country, and we began to purchase oil from OPEC. Now we are really 60 percent dependent on overseas sources, and about every 2 or 3 weeks we have to wait to see what OPEC is going to do to see what is going to happen to our fuel prices at the pump. We do not want this to happen, certainly, to our food supply.

So the current farm bill is less expensive than Freedom to Farm. It is working well, and I think we should think long and hard before we make any mid-course changes.

INTRODUCTION OF THE WITNESS SECURITY AND PROTECTION ACT OF 2005

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the countless communities across this Nation that live under a tyranny of fear due to witness intimidation.

Our criminal justice system relies on witnesses to provide essential evidence to law enforcement in the administration of justice. Unfortunately, drug dealers and other criminals employ brutal tactics to silence witnesses, including threats, vandalism, violence, and even murder.

When cases crumble due to witness intimidation, defendants that may be convicted for their crimes are free once again to violate the sanctity of our communities. A National Institute of Justice study concluded: "Witness intimidation is a pervasive and insidious problem. No part of the country is spared and no witness can feel entirely free or safe."

A number of prosecutors interviewed for this study "suspect witness intimidation occurs in up to 75 to 100 percent of the violent crimes committed in some gang-dominated neighborhoods."

With that said, we must acknowledge that witness intimidation is a menacing cancer in our society that, if left untreated, will continue to spread and intensify, undermining the very foundation of our criminal justice system.

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Mr. Speaker, witness intimidation is eroding public trust in the government's ability to protect witnesses and demoralizing needed community cooperation to enforce the law.

Around the country, from urban centers to the heartland, reporting crimes can be extremely dangerous and even deadly. On February 4 of this year, WGAL, Channel 8 reported a 10-year-old named Katie Collman was found dead in an Indiana creek. A suspect in her killing confessed he wanted to intimidate little Katie after she witnessed him producing or consuming methamphetamine.

In the city that I call my home, Baltimore City, our State's Attorney reports that at least 25 percent of the

nonfatal shooting cases are dismissed due to witness intimidation issues and most murder cases are affected in one way or another. Since September 2004, five witnesses have been shot or murdered.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps nowhere is there an example more clear in illustrating the realities of witness intimidation than in the tragedy that claimed the lives of the Dawson family from my district in East Baltimore City.

In response to Mrs. Dawson's heroic efforts to report intense drug distribution activity in her neighborhood, the Dawson family home was firebombed in the middle of the night on October 16, 2002. This insidious act not only stole the lives of Mr. Dawson and Mrs. Dawson, but also those of their five young children.

Unfortunately, this was not the only serious incident of witness intimidation to surface in Baltimore City. Baltimore Police Detective Thomas Newman was murdered 2 years ago after his testimony in a trial concerning a shooting.

On December 2, 2004 a DVD produced by criminals entitled "Stop the Snitching" surfaced in Baltimore. It graphically illustrates the violent drug culture and the code of silence on the streets that can paralyze entire communities seeking to abide by the law.

"Stop the Snitching" goes so far as to depict grotesque images of three bullet ridden bloody corpses accompanied by the phrase "snitch prevention."

On January 15, 2004, in the North Baltimore community of Harwood, Edna McAbier had her home firebombed in apparent retaliation for her work to purge her community of criminal activity.

I am sure many of my colleagues could recount many other such incidents in their districts.

Regrettably, these examples are representative of a growing problem of bold intimidation that send a clear message to the Nation that cannot be overstated. Those who would cooperate with police in the pursuit of justice face serious retaliation and possibly execution.

Witness protection programs provide an indispensable tool to law enforcement to combat crime and address witness intimidation. The Witness Security Program established in 1970 and administered by the Department of Justice has successfully carried out its charge to protect witnesses testifying in extremely serious Federal cases.

The United States Marshals Service has done an outstanding job of providing witnesses and their family who have been placed in their custody with long-term protection, relocation, new identities, housing, employment, medical treatment and funds to cover the most essential of needs.

In over 30 years, not a single witness has been harmed that followed security procedures while being actively pro-

tected by the United States Marshals Service. More to the point, cases involving the testimony of the WSP participants have an 89 percent conviction rate.

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In over 30 years, not a single witness has been harmed that followed security procedures while being actively protected by the USMS. More to the point, cases involving the testimony of the WSP participants have an 89 percent conviction rate.

In contrast, State witness protection programs are severely under-funded and enjoy virtually no Federal support.

While non-federal witnesses can participate in the WSP under certain conditions, States are required to reimburse the Federal Government for the cost of providing such protection unless a waiver is granted.

As a result, State and local prosecutors often must choose between funding investigations or funding costly, but necessary witness protection programs. This often leads to some jurisdictions providing no witness protection at all.

No one wins when law enforcement officials are forced to make such choices.

That is why I introduced the Witness Security and Protection Act of 2005, H.R. 908. I am proud the esteemed senior Senator from New York, Senator SCHUMER, will be reintroducing a companion bill to this legislation in the Senate.

H.R. 908 would establish within the USMS a Short-Term State Witness Protection Program tailored to meet the needs of witnesses testifying in State and local trials involving homicide, a serious violent felony or a serious drug offense.

H.R. 908 would also authorize \$90 million per year in competitive grants for the next 3 years. State and local district attorneys and the U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia, can use these funds to provide witness protection or pay the cost of enrolling their witnesses in the Short-Term State Witness Protection Program within the USMS.

Grants under this legislation would only be awarded to prosecutors in States with high homicide rates to ensure we target those most in need of Federal support.

Improving protection for State and local witnesses will move us one step closer toward alleviating the fears of and threats to prospective witnesses, and help to safeguard our communities from violence.

While we cannot bring back all those who carried a heavy burden of fear due to witness intimidation, we can honor their sacrifice by taking the necessary steps today to fight against that future intimidation.

I urge my colleagues to join me in taking that critical step by cosponsoring, H.R. 908, the Witness Security and Protection Act.

AUSTRALIAN AND COALITION INVOLVEMENT IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CONAWAY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor tonight to make what might be a shocking announcement, and that is an announcement of something that has not been very available in the United States news media, something that needs to be acknowledged on the floor of this Congress. And that is that one of America's most reliable and possibly historically are the most reliable American ally, an American ally that has been with us in virtually every major conflict throughout the 20th century, and is with us today in Iraq as one of our strong coalition partners, joining together with Great Britain and the other 25 or so coalition partners that are there.

The nation of Australia has doubled their troop deployment to Iraq. They have done so at a time when there are other nations that are looking for opportunities to leave that area. And they have done so at a time with historical moment, when we are seeing people marching in the streets of Lebanon reaching out for freedom, acting upon the Bush Doctrine, standing up for freedom. The Australians are standing with us, as they stood with us in World War I, World War II, Vietnam and Korea and, as I said, virtually every major conflict.

The 900 or so troops that are in there now are there to defend, in an interesting irony, they are there to defend the Japanese, who have also deployed to Iraq to provide engineering and other services there in the country at a time when it is pivotal and significant that we help them continue to grasp the freedom that they did when they reached to go to the polls on January 30.

Now, the reason I make this announcement as an announcement is because I think it is pretty difficult for a regular American citizen who watches television every day and reads the paper every day, and maybe even surfs the Internet every day, to even know this significant piece of international news, a piece of international news that was published throughout a great number of Internet services, as well as mainstream media around the world,

but not so well in the United States of America.

So, I looked around and I asked the question, how would a person know this?

I came across it because I picked up the Sunday newspaper in Sydney, Australia, and this is what I found. The countries that refuse to surrender, U.S., Australia and Britain, boost their troop numbers.

Great Britain increased their numbers there, as has the United States, as has now Australia. And the national news media that handled it here in this country were few and far between.

So how would a person go about finding this out?

Well, I will go to Al Jazeera's Web page and see if I can find this little piece of information that I happened to have been coincidentally privy to. And I find on Al Jazeera's Web page dated February 22, Australia to send more troops to Iraq.

I did not find that in major newspaper in America, with the exception of the Los Angeles Times and one other newspaper on the west coast. Not the Washington Post. Not the Washington Times. Not the New York Post, not the New York Times. Not generally available to Americans.

Mainstream media broadcast TV, most of the cable networks had a little story, one blip. But on the mainstream media that was not something that came out on Peter Jennings, Brian Williams and not Dan Rather. But it did come out of Al Jazeera.

These are our tried and true allies. The people that stood with us for over a century have doubled their troop commitments out of Australia, and there is a long list of them standing with us as allies, as has Great Britain, and as has a number of the other coalition partners.

We need to recognize them, Mr. Speaker. We need to acknowledge them. We need to thank them for their service, not just to the support of the coalition troops, but their service to the freedom of humanity. And I challenge the news media to pick this up and try to scoop Al Jazeera next time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFazio) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFazio addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

BUSINESS-AS-USUAL WITH FDA NOT GOOD ENOUGH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the problematic FDA approval process. In recent weeks, we have learned that the Federal Drug Administration has es-

tablished an independent board to review post-market drug safety issues. We have also learned that the FDA committee issued a recommendation to return Vioxx to the market and keep Bextra and Celebrex on the market.

On the surface, it would seem the FDA has taken measures to address drug safety issues. However, we know all too well the devil is always in the details, and by looking at these details, it is clear that it is just business as usual at the FDA.

Take the committee that issued the recent recommendations on the COX-2 inhibitors. Ten of the 32 drug advisers had ties to the pharmaceutical industry and, in fact, had received consulting fees in the past from the drug manufacturers. I wonder how they voted? Nine to one to keep the drugs on the market.

Without the votes of these industry consultants, the committee would have recommended withdrawal of Bextra from the market and keep Vioxx off the market. We will never know if their votes are the result of an actual conflict of interest.

Yet to stay above the ethical fray, there should not even be an appearance of conflict of interest at the FDA. Their job is too important. With nearly a third of the panel receiving consulting fees from the industry, the appearance of conflict of interest is undeniable.

Unfortunately, the newly-established Drug Safety Oversight Board will suffer from similar problems. Despite the claims that the board will be independent, all but two members of the board will be FDA employees. What is more, the board will include FDA employees from the Office of New Drugs, the entity that approved the drugs in the first place. What incentive would board members truly have to conclude the decisions made by the FDA were mistakes in judgment and should be reversed? Even less likely is the chance that the board members from the Office of New Drugs would vote to reverse their own decisions or those of their closest colleagues when it comes to drug safety.

Mr. Speaker, the makeup of this board is more incestuous than independent, and, unfortunately, this problem pervades the entire FDA approval process, not just approval of pharmaceuticals. We have experienced it in our own efforts to keep silicone breast implants off the market. When the implant manufacturers came before the FDA, 40 percent of the advisory panel was made up of plastic surgeons.

Needless to say, each of the plastic surgeons voted to approve silicone breast implants. There is a conflict of interest if I ever saw one, since plastic surgeons are virtually guaranteed more business if the FDA approves again the use of silicone breast implants.

Despite the panel's recommendation to approve the device, the FDA, thank goodness, recognized the need for additional clinical trials, and rejected that